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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001704

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SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAN NUCLEAR: TURKEY STILL WORKING TRR
DEAL, URGES PATIENCE

REF: SECSTATE 120288

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Jeffrey, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

Summary

1. (C) On November 25, DCM raised reftel points with MFA Deputy Undersecretary Engin Soysal. We delivered the same message to MFA Deputy DG for South Asia Burak Akcapar and Nonproliferation Section Head Mustafa Yurdakul. Soysal said that FM Davutoglu was planning to brief NSA Jones on his discussions with the Iranians during his recent trip to Tebriz, likely on Thursday, November 26. Davutoglu is still working to secure a deal on the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) with the goal of getting all 1200 kg of uranium out of Iran. Soysal said that the ability to have an open dialogue with Iran was "precious" to Turkey and it would seek to avoid a step which would put this dialogue -- and thereby a diplomatic solution -- at risk. Akcapar said a TRR deal is still possible, but required patience and more subtle diplomacy. Yurkdal said Turkey's statement on Iran at the IAEA BoG meeting will be similar in tone to its September statement, and will call on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA. End Summary.

TRR Deal Still Possible

2. (C) Senior Foreign ministry officials believe that it is still possible to make progress with the Iranians on the TRR proposal. Soysal said that he did not want to get into specifics before FM Davutoglu's direct discussions with Washington later in the evening, but sought to make three key points:

- The dialogue now underway with Iran is fundamentally different, at a much more substantive level, than it had been in the past;
- The internal political situation in Iran was making it extraordinarily difficult for Iran's leaders to come to agreement with the international community; and
- Turkey saw as a "precious asset" its ability to have direct conversations with Iran's leaders and would be very hesitant to take any step which would harm this dialogue.

3. (C) DCM pushed back, pointing out that the U.S. had been very patient, but there had been no credible response from the Iranian side. We questioned whether Turkey thought that Iran was taking advantage of Turkey's good offices so as to further delay any international reaction. Soysal said that FM Davutoglu's deep conviction was that setting hard deadlines and making public statements worked against the

goals of the international community with Iran.

¶4. (C) Akcapar, who accompanied FM Davutolgu during his visit to Tabriz, said Davutoglu plans to brief NSA Jones on his discussions with Iranians on the TRR proposal once he returned from Libya (where he is accompanying PM Erdogan). Akcapar characterized the November 20 P5 Plus 1 Political Directors' statement as "unhelpful" and urged that we give more time for the engagement track to bear fruit. While acknowledging the need to consider the coercive track in the absence of a reply from Iran, Akcapar warned against a public shift in emphasizing that track, saying, "Carrots and sticks don't work with the Iranians. They'll just look for their own stick in response."

¶5. (C) Iranian President Ahmadinejad is feeling vulnerable about concluding a deal because of the political dynamics in Iran, Akcapar told us, noting that even "reformist" presidential candidate Mousavi has spoken out against it. Additional overt pressure and threats, in Akcapar's view, will only weaken the hand of those trying to make a TRR deal work within the Iranian regime.

IAEA Report of Iran

¶6. (C) We met separately on November 24 with MFA Nonproliferation and Disarmament Section Head Mustafa Yurdakul. Regarding the IAEA report on Iran, Yurdakul said he noted that despite the decrease in the number of centrifuges being operated by Iran, the amount of uranium

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enriched remained at a steady level, suggesting that the Iranians are becoming more efficient in their enrichment process. He also found noteworthy that the Iranians are apparently running low on processed uranium ore in storage, as indicated by the increase in activity at Iran's uranium mines. On Qom, Yurdakul said that Iran has been partially cooperative and have been operating on its own timeframe rather than based on its safeguard obligations and agreed that this was not sufficient.

¶7. (C) Yurdakul expected Turkey's statement on Iran to be similar in tone to its statement during the last BoG meeting in September and will avoid any harsh wording. He said Turkey's IAEA governor Hakan Fidan will use his statement on Iran to:

- Praise the IAEA's efforts and express support for the IAEA's work;
- Note areas where Iran has been cooperative;
- Also note the Agency's ongoing inability to verify the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program; and
- Highlight the importance of full cooperation with the IAEA.

Comment

¶8. (C) The GoT is still holding out hope for a deal on the Tehran Research Reactor and Davutoglu remains personally and deeply engaged. MFA officials appear to recognize that a breakthrough on the TRR proposal is extremely unlikely, but are still unwilling to contemplate next steps until the deal is officially dead. Absent an official Iranian response to the TRR proposal, the GoT will likely remain unwilling to sign on to any measures or resolutions that highlight Iran's failures to meet its international obligations for fear that such actions will jeopardize the TRR deal.

JEFFREY

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